(6) Prevention of distress sale by providing facilities of pledge loan and marketing credit etc.

(7) Encouraging farmers to diversify to high value crops.

Further, to protect the interests of the small and marginal farmers, the Government is encouraging farmers' groups cooperatives/self-help groups to assist in contract design and its implementation. In addition, the Government announces each season Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for major agricultural commodities.

Assistance to Orissa Under National Horticulture Mission

401. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Orissa Government has requested for Central assistance for fourteen districts which are not convered by the National Horticulture Mission;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time-frame within which it would be considered and the State Government would be apprised of the action taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government of Orissa had submitted a project proposal for taking up horticultural programmes in fourteen districts not covered under the National Horticulture Mission (NHM) during 2006-07, to be implemented in accordance with the norms of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Macro Management in Agriculture. The proposal was examined by the Ministry. Since all the Horticulture Development Programmes of the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation were subsumed under NHM and since 16 districts were already included under the mission based on the potential and marketability, the State Government was informed in April 2006 about the inability to agree to their proposal. However, based on their Annua! Action Plan (AAP) for the year 2006-07, three more districts *viz.* Phulbani, Dhenkanal and Ganjam have been included under NHM and the State Government have been intimated accordingly in July 2006.